

February 8, 2011

SB261: Annual sessions

Introduced by: J. Essmann

Having followed this and the 2009 session pretty closely, I see no reason to move to annual sessions.

The funding of a legislative session has to be considerable and we don't need that expense every year.

As of 6:30pm Monday night, there was no fiscal note posted. Where is the fiscal note? There should be added expenses for annual sessions, such as legislator mileage and lodging, legislative staffing, printing, janitorial, food service, and all the other expenses associated with a session?

Sessions would take less time and handle issues more efficiently if legislators would:

1) **stop bringing the same bills forward every session.** It is like a teenager who asks their father for a car and the father says no. The teenager then asks the mother for a car and the mother says no. A week later, the teenager tells the father that everyone else has a car so he should have one too, the father says no. The teenager then "accidentally" misses the bus 3 days in a week and points out to the mother that if they had a car, the mother wouldn't have to drive them and the mother says no. You get the picture.

2) **get together before a session and bring a consolidated bill** instead of several bills that deal with the same topic (such as all the voter registration bills, the bison bills, or the myriad of property tax bills this session). Would that take a change in the Constitution to handle all aspects of say, voter registration (youth election judges, same day registration, requirements for registration, etc) in one bill as opposed to multiple bills?

3) **focus on legislation that pertains to all Montanans, and not just special interests.**

4) **eliminate the "fuzzy, feel good" and/or "BS" bills** (such as naming things or denoting a day for something).

Bottom line, people want a more efficient, cost effective government.

I don't think taxpayers want, or can afford, annual sessions and urge the committee to vote no on this bill.

Thank you,

Cindy Swank

6670 Sleeping Giant View
Helena, MT 59602

5102 Road 2041
Poplar, MT 59255